



**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF ACCOUNTANTS**

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Agenda Item

1-5

Committee: International Accounting Education Standards Board

Meeting Location: Istanbul

Meeting Date: November 6 to 8, 2006

Report from the “Africa Region Learning Workshop” (Nairobi, Kenya, September 28-29, 2006)

Introduction

250 delegates from more than 50 countries attended the “Africa Region Learning Workshop” organized by IFAC, the World Bank, African Development Bank, ECSAFA and FIDEF. The meeting covered a wide range of issues relating to the profession in Africa, including:

- SME/SMP Perspectives;
- Corruption and Ethics;
- Education and Accounting Development;
- Establishing and Developing National Accounting Bodies;
- Sustaining Good Corporate Governance; and
- Strengthening Public Sector Accounting and Auditing.

Full details of the meeting and its conclusions can be viewed at: www.ifac.org/arlw; the purpose of this report is to highlight some of the education issues discussed during the meeting.

Conclusions (Education)

The main challenge to building the profession in Africa was agreed to be that of developing both institutional and human capacity. In terms of education, a number of recommendations were agreed upon by delegates, including:

- Adopting a regional approach to education – sharing materials, curricula and expertise;
- The need to do more to gain the support of governments and academe in developing high-quality accounting education programs; and
- The importance of developing ethics education at all levels, in an effort to reduce corruption.

A number of specific suggestions were made during the meeting that may merit consideration by the IAESB:

- Accounting Technicians – important for capacity building in public and private (especially SME) sector. Long-term solution to building capacity of accounting profession overall? IFAC’s Developing Nations Committee (DNC) is now considering work in this area.
- Public sector – will the IAESB consider developing a specialist standard/guidance for public sector accountants?
- Training centers – will the IAESB consider developing guidance for member bodies on accrediting training providers, to try and promote high-quality training?
- Can the IAESB (and others) make more materials available via the web (most effective delivery mechanism)?
- Can the IAESB open a public discussion board to allow accounting educators to comment on IAESB pronouncements and other issues?

Education Workshop

Approximately 50 delegates attended a workshop on “Education and Accounting Development,” chaired by Tatiana Krylova from UNCTAD, and facilitated by Simon Thompson, IAESB Technical Manager.

Three questions were put to attendees:

- 1) *What progress has been made in implementing International Education Standards to date, and what are the major obstacles to full implementation?*
- 2) *What are the key issues for Africa/individual countries in implementing high-quality accounting education programs, including examinations, for students?*
- 3) *What are the key issues for Africa/individual countries in implementing high-quality Continuing Professional Development programs for accountants?*

Overall, attendees agreed that many of the specific challenges to successful implementation of International Education Standards, and to successful development of high quality education programs in general, were related to the lack of institutional capacity and resources.

Suggestions for overcoming this included:

- Adopting a regional approach, developing ‘knowledge hubs’ through organizations such as ECSAFA, including:
 - regional development of education materials
 - building a team of regional accounting educators and CPD trainers
 - greater networking at regional events and seminars

- Improving convergence and consistency of accounting education, through:
 - developing and sharing common curricula and syllabi
 - sharing expertise in areas such as IT, CPD and Practical Experience in particular
 - facilitating recognition of education and qualifications between countries
 - working with employers to improve access to practical experience under the guidance of a mentor

- Gaining support of key stakeholders:
 - Governments – can develop legislation to promote high-quality education
 - Accounting firms – can do more to support education and practical experience
 - International institutions – can provide access to expertise and funding

- Facilitating access to high-quality materials at low-cost, especially using e-learning as a form of delivery